THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The Finance Minister attended the Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference (GIEC) organised by Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in June, 1996 in Singapore.

(b) and (c) The Conference was attended by about 600 delegates from countries all over the world including inter-alia, Singapore, Hongkong, Malaysia, South Korea, U.K. USA, UAE, Japan, Switzerland, Germany respresenting NRIs, Key Indian Industrialists, academics and foreign CEOS with experience of India, and Corporate Houses of Singapore. The conference generated tremendous enthusiasm among the participants about India, its future, and its potential for being an extremely attractive investment destination. The keenness of NRIs to involve themselves with India by interlinking among themselves and with the industry and Government in India was emphatically highlighted by participants. participants emphasised the need for continuity and to impart thrust to the process of NRI involvement in the economic development of India. The conference also provided an opportunity to Singaporean business to establish contacts with participants with a view to further business opportunities.

Financing of High Tech Activities by Commercial Banks

996. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that commercial banks have been directed to finance high-tech activities like aquaculture, floriculture, bio-technology etc. in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) details regarding funds made available to the farmers for acquaculture and floriculture in the State of Maharashtra during the last three years by commercial banks, bank-wise, year-wise and district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that although no general circular regarding financing high-tech activities in aquaculture such as tissue culture, floriculture and bio-technology has been issued to the banks, they have clarified to the banks that advances for such activities are to be classified as agriculture advances as part of priority sector advances.

However, as far as assistance from commercial banks for promotion of brackish-water aquaculture is concerned, RBI had issued a circular in April 1992 to the scheduled commercial banks. A copy of the circular is at Statement (See below).

(c) The data reporting system of RBI does not generate information in the manner asked for. However, National bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has reported that it had provided refinance for aquaculture and floriculture projects in the State of Maharashtra during the last three years as given below:

(Rs. lakhs)

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Aquaculture	—	4	134
Floriculture	222	531	217

The district-wise information of the above disbursement is, however, not available.

Statement

Subject:—*Assistance through commercial banks for promotion of brackishwater aquaculture.*

As you are aware brackishwater aquaculture is not only a capital and technology intensive activity, but is also considered to be highly profitable. We have been informed by Ministry of Comemrce/Finance that commercial banks are not coming forward to assist small far-

mers engaged in this relatively new sector. The matter has been examined by us and banks are advised to provide all possible assistance to farmers undertaking this activity subject to the usual terms and conditions laid down in our guidelines for advances to priority sector in respect of margin, security norms and time limit set for disposal of loan applications.

2. Wherever this type of activity is important in a district the LBOs may be advised to obtain the details thereof and these should be duly incorporated in the DCPs and the performance of banks in this regard may be reviewed on a regular basis.

3. Further, since this is a comparatively new activity in fisheries, we advise that you may consider the conduct of suitable programmes on the subject in your Staff Training Colleges.

4. We shall be glad if you will please issue suitable instructions to your controlling/branch offices in this regard.

Plan to optimally utilize Ahmedabad international airport

997. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to optimally utilize Ahmedabad international airport up to full capacity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the direct service between Ahmedabad to Nairobi & South Africa are likely to be started;

(d) by when the services between Ahmedabad & Australia are likely to be started;

(e) whether there is any plan to start direct flight from Ahmedabad to Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore; and

(f) whether there is also a plan to connect Ahmedabad with the Gulf countries?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. To the extent traffic potential justifies.

(c) to (e) The traffic potential between Ahmedabad on one side and Nairobi, South Africa, Australia, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore on the other, is not enough at present to operate commercially viable international services.

(f) Indian Airlines operates international services from Ahmedabad to Muscat and Sharjah. A number of international services over Bombay and Delhi are also connected with Ahmedabad through Hub-and-Spoke flight.

जनसंख्या से संबंधित परियोजनाओं के लिए निधि का उपयोग

998. **श्री गोविन्दराम मिरी:** क्या **स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या जनसंख्या से संबंधित परियोजनाओं के लिए दी गई धनराशि का कुछ राज्यों द्वारा उपयोग नहीं किया गया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या केन्द्र सरकार ने उक्त धनराशि का उपयोग करने के लिए संबंधित राज्यों को दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए हैं;

(ग) किन-किन राज्यों को ये दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए हैं;

(घ) जारी किए गए दिशा-निर्देशों का ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण है।

स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री सलीम इकबाल शेरवानी): (क) से (ङ) व्यय के आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि सामान्यतः सभी राज्यों द्वारा निधियों का उपयोग किया जाता है।